

The Genesis and Evolution of India's Composite Culture: An Overview

Dr. Bajrang Bali

Associate Professor of History, SPSGS Government First Grade College, Kanakagiri-583293, Koppal, Karnataka

ABSTRACT

India's composite culture is a blend of religious, linguistic, & artistic traditions, promoting tolerance & unity through shared ideas. Bhakti & Sufi movements shaped India's composite culture by promoting tolerance, equality, and devotion through local languages. Islam came into India from the Malabar Coast in south since 3-4th century and was instrumental in evolution of the composite Indian culture. The evolution of Hinduism and Buddhism has been shaped by a multitude of movements, such as the Bhakti and Sufi movements. The people belonging to other cultures brought their cultural habits, thoughts and ideas, which got amalgamated into the existing culture. The evolution of a composite culture reached its zenith during the independence movement, which found its expression in the Constitution.

Keywords: Religion Islam, Muslim, Hindu, Hinduism cultural, relations and traditions

INTRODUCTION

Hinduism is a faith that on the whole is favorable to the development of the secular state in India. One of the most significant frames of India's cultural aggregation has been the idea of a joint Hindu-Muslim syncretic culture. Composite culture has to a great extent developed in oral traditions and in the encounter of the mystical traditions of Hinduism and Islam. Composite nationalism is a concept that argues that the Indian nation is made up of people of diverse cultures, castes, communities, and faiths. In this vast land of ours have dwelt from time immemorial people of different races and cultures and into this land entered races from beyond the mountains and seas but the old inhabitants and the new comers after they had struggled and fought eventually forgot their enmities made peace and joined in their common Endeavour. each epoch of such a fusion was marked by an efflorescence of culture in which the different elements were mixed in such a way as to make one whole the socio economic continuity is the distinguishing feature of Indian history the unity of her history her ideals and of her humanity is the living spirit of India

Religion of Aryans who lived there in 1000 BCE was called Brahminism and not Hinduism. Islam and Hinduism existed peacefully for 700 years and first Muslims. India had commercial as well as socio cultural relations with the west Asian countries and Europe long before the rise of Islam the Arabs served as the connecting link between India and the outside world in this regard after their conversion to Islam the Arabs cast their covetous eyes on India the Muslim conquest eyes on India was a long drawn process of multi phases it took them six centuries to reach the southern confines of India the invaders came to India in three stages the first invasion took place in A.D.712 led by Muhammad -bin- Qasim the Arabs were not destined to raise Islam to status of a political force in India the second phase of invasion occurred at the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century it was led by Subuktigin and Mahmud of Ghazni who belonged to a Turkish family the final phase which resulted in the establishment of the Muslim rule in India consisted of the invasion of Muhammad Ghorī. These invasions took place two hundred years later. Islam's arrival in India in the 7th century influenced ceremonies, social habits, arts, and opposed the caste system.

Islam and Hinduism, which appeared at the start so antithetical, at last intermingled, each one stirred the profoundest depth of the other and, from their synthesis, grew the religion of Bhakti and Tasawwuf, the religion of love and devotion, which swept the hearts of followers of different religions and sects of India. The establishment of Delhi Sultanate led to a prolonged and deeper contact between Hinduism and Islam. Both religions were influenced by each other and mutual exchange of ideas and thoughts took place.

Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, Followers of as many as nine religions live in, India and are part of its rich and harmonious culture. The Bhakti Movement and Sufism provide the best example of the interaction between them. The currents of Islam Sufism and Hindu Bhakti combined in to a mighty stream, which fertilized old desolate tracts and changed the face of the country. It was in this spirit of India which achieved apparently an impossible task of reconcile the puritanical severity and awe-inspiring transcendence of Islam into the luxuriant fullness and abundance of forms and the

intuitive perception of their immanent unity with Hinduism, and created those monuments of architecture and painting, music and poetry and love-inspired religion which are the heritage of Indian history during the middle ages.

It was through the teachings of Sufis that Islam found entrance into Hindu hearts. They fraternized with Hindu ascetics and gurus. Each learnt to respect the other's religious faith and life. It was realized by the Muslim rulers on the whole that the Islamic laws promulgated for the Arab society of Madina were not strictly applicable in the conditions existing in India. The form society, which the prophet of Islam envisaged and in which the state was the Church and the Church the state, did not last more than thirty years. The Abbasids who came after Umayyads shed the simple Arab manners, surrounded themselves with pomp and pelf, and introduced in their courts the etiquette, ceremony and splendor of ancient Iran. "The First Indian War of Independence in 1857 was a major uprising against British rule in India. The rebellion was fueled by a range of grievances, including economic exploitation, social and religious discrimination, and political oppression" (Brown 1994: 85). Thus medieval Indian society as it stood in the beginning of the eighteenth century on the eve of the establishment of the British rule had come into existence as a result of five hundred years of continuous interaction and synthesis between Hinduism and Islam, or the two socio-cultural streams.

What precise role was played by Islam in molding the composition and character of the Indian society is a matter of conjecture; one thing is however certain that the sum-total of Islamic contribution to the medieval India society was but a fraction of the whole. India, the land of the teeming millions, with one of the richest and the most conservation cultural treasures troves of the world, was like a mighty ocean into which the Islamic stream of refreshing and invigorating waters mingled up and became a part and parcel of the whole.

The descendants of the once foreign Muslim conquerors were though roughly Indianized by the end the seventeenth century; India became their homeland or watan as much as that of the Hindus, and from the socio-cultural points of view they became indistinguishable from the rest of the Indian messages but for their 'sentimental leanings' towards Mecca and Medina which were the places of pilgrimage for them as Kapilavastu, Bodhi Gaya and Nalanda had once been for the Buddhist of South Asia and China. Otherwise the Muslim countries of Arabia, Iran and Turkistan were as much foreign to them as they were to the Hindus of India. The thesis of Mohammad Yasin that the Muslims of Hindustan were different from their co-religions in the other parts of the world is correct'. In spite of the existence of two religions, there were not any deep cultural differences between them. They took pleasure in the study of each other's religion, philosophy and science. Their arts were common. They had no prejudices in regard to participations in the fairs and festivals of each other. They spoke the same language, wore similar clothes, furnished their houses in the same style, had similar outlook upon the life of this world, if not also the next.

According to Havell, the great admirer of Hinduism, Islam influenced the Hindu social life in two ways. There was a rise of rigidities in the Hindu society. Islam also gave the depressed and down-trodden masses the prospect of improving their social status and economic lot. Havell has emphasized of Islam but the democratic nature of the Islamic society that attracted the attention of the Indian people. "Hindu cultural texts such as the Manusmriti classify people through stratification and class, i.e. Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras and allows fluidity and movement of people from one caste to another depending on their profession and what they choose as their "dharma" which literally translates to duty or purpose" (Berreman, Gerald D. 1972) Hinduism and Islam are two largely practiced religions, specifically in India and the subcontinents.

The Muslim adopted many Hindu marriage customs, and followed a number of practices which were repugnant to Islamic law; for example in the matter of fixing the degree of kingship for eligibility in marriage in prescribing limits of endogamy and exogamy based upon tribal and class divisions, in the observance of ceremonial accompanying the marriage contract. Laws of inheritance were supplanted by custom (in many parts of India. Widow marriage and divorce were frowned upon as among the Hindus. "The Hindu caste system has been described as four Varnas or as thousands of endogamous hereditary groups called jātis" (Barth, Fredrik 1962) Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism led to the development of a new culture known as the Indo-Islamic culture.

The Muslims adopted many Hindu funeral ceremonies, for example, the Tija, the Daswan etc. the ceremonies concerning pregnancy and childbirth like the seven month, sixth day to child birth, the shaving of the child's head (Mundan-Aqiq), lucking of Khir, boring of ears, birthday anniversary etc. were common to both. Even such purely Hindu practices as the immolation of the widow on the death of her husband and Jauhar were occasionally resorted to by the Muslims. Ibn Batuta relates the story of the defeat of Aynul Mulk by Muhammad Bin Tughlaq and tells how his wife plunged into death after her husband. Again the Zafar Namah describes the Jauhar committed by wife of Kamaluddin, governor of Bhatnair, when he proceeded to fight against Timur. "A Muslim is said to have visited them and abandoned Islam. Besides their power to

distract even Muslims from worshipping Allah, they may have real magical powers and even grant their worshippers wishes” (Elias, J. J. 2014) It is true that the religious fasts and festivals of the two communities were different.

But the manner of observing them was more or less similar. Muharram celebration Were assimilated to Dasehra Shab-e-Barat to Shivaratri Ramzen and id to Navaratra etc. besides, there were many fairs and festive occasions which were common; Even so far as the peculiar communal festival were concerned the Hindus and the Muslims participated in both Holi and Muharram Muhammad bin Tughlaq was the first Delhi Sultanate king who participated in Holi. The various Hindu and Muslim festivals were celebrated with impartial splendor. On the Desehra, the anniversary of Ramas victory over demons, the imperial horses and elephants were arrayed in decorated canopy and paraded for inspection. On the Raksha- Bandhan, fastened strings on the Emperors arm. Diwali saw gambling in the palace, and Shivaratri was duly observed. Nor were the Muslim Id and Shab-e-Barat neglected. “Hinduism forbids consanguineous marriage of parallel cousins, and strongly recommends seven degrees of biological separation between bride and groom” (Bittles, A. H. 2012) The social culture of India does not belong to Hindus alone or any single religious tradition of India.

Marriages between Muslims and Hindus were rare, but those among the ruling families were will recognized. The Mughal emperors were not the pioneers of this policy. In Kashmir Hindu –Muslim marriages were of a long –standing. Zain-ul-Abedin(1420-70) married the two daughters of Raja Manakdeo of jammu. Another daughter was married to Raja Jusrath, the Muslim Gakkhar Chief. “Mughals promoted religious harmony and cultural advancements and nurtured Hindu scholars, poets, and artists, facilitating a dynamic cultural interchange that enriched both Islamic and Hindu traditions, there were instances of religious conflicts between the Mughals and the Rajput over control of territories. Aurangzeb was criticized for his policies of religious intolerance towards Hindus” (Mehrotra, Abhishek, 2003)

Akbar, Jahangir, Farrukh Siyar, Sulaiman Shukoh and Sipihir Shukoh took Hindu princesses for their wives. The Hindu royal family of Kachh formed matrimonial alliances with the Muslims. On the other side, the Hindu was far too ridden with cast inhibitions to receive a Muslim lady in the innermost sanctum of his palace. Yet such instanced were not unknown. In Rajauri, Laddakh and Baltistan, Jahangir noticed inter- mar-riages between the two communities. The love affair of peshwa Baji Rao-1 with Masani is well known .In 1734 she bore the peshwa a son, Shamsheer Bahadur, who was brought up as a Muslim. “Akbar abolished jizya and accommodated Hindu, Jain, Parsi, and Christian religious figures. Later rulers adopted more restrictive policies: Shah Jahan restricted the construction of new Hindu temples and Aurangzeb prohibited the construction and repair of certain Hindu temples, reimposed jizya and ordered the destruction of many prominent temples” (Saha, Shandip , 2011). Islam contributed to the development of India's composite cultural traditions through interaction with existing social and religious traditions.

Socially the Musalmans of India developed an organization similar to that of the Hindus. Muslim Socially the musclemans of India developed an organization similar to that of the Hindus Muslim. Society in India unlike muslim societies in other countries became divided into castes comparable with the Hindu castes socially the musclemans of India. Correspond with Brahmins mug Hal and pythons Kshatriyas sheikhs with Vaisyas and the group of artisans craftsmen and labourers with Shudras in every social system women hold a characteristic position Arab and Turkish societies differ considerably from hindu society n thes matter yet in India the muslims followed not the customs of Arabia and Turkistan but those of India in toilet dress ornaments ways of society in these matter yet in India the muslims followed not the customs of Arabia and Turkistan but those of India in toilet dress ornaments ways of social intercourse daily routine of they adopted Indian ways and manners the Muslim marriage ceremonies were adopted Indian ways and manners the Muslim marriage ceremonies were adopted from Hinduism.

Nisbat Haldi Mihnde Ril Mandwa Barat Falwa Kangan etc were Muslim adaptations of Hindu ceremonies early marriage of girls prohibition of widow marriage dependence and subordination of woman and the use of the veil were common to Hindus and Muslims the presence of Islam made the Hindus more orthodox and conservative in their religious outlook and social customs according to some historians caste system became still more rigid and the evils of child marriage and infanticide found their way into the hindu society as a negative impact of the aggressiveness of the muslim conquerors Purdah system of the muslims was adopted by the ladies of upper strata of the Hindus Muslims in India largely discarded the garments worn in Arabia Iran and central Asia and mainly adopted India costumes and clothes the use of Arab amama jubba ribagh tahmad and tasma disappeared mining place to Hindu Pagri and Chira Kurta and Angarkha Patka and Dopatta Pajama and Juta.

The entire range of Muslim dress social customs and food habits indoor and out door games manners and social behavior superstitions ad taboos customs and chera kurta and angarkha patka and dopatta pajama and juta. The entire range of Muslim dress social customs and food habits indoor and out door games manners and social behaviour superstitions and taboos were absorbed by the multitude of the Hindus without demur that they would not touch beef nor eat in the common

utensils or kitchens with the Muslims in the cultural aspects of life we find the same kind of fusion there. Arabic is not now the language of Islam; it is not now the language of any group of Muslims in India although it is studied by the learned for obvious reasons. Turkish was the spoken language of the Muslim conquerors from Central Asia; Persian was the language of the court from the beginning of Muslim rule till its final overthrow; neither of these languages is today spoken by the Indian Muslims nor has the conqueror imposed them on the conquered.

India is a secular country still our legislators enact separate laws for Hindus like Hindu Marriage Act and for Muslims. Islam and Hinduism share some ritual practices, such as fasting and pilgrimage, but their views differ on various aspects. It was during this period that modern regional languages developed and devotion expressed themselves in poetry and music; they were instruments in bringing about union with God. Urdu, a common literature of Hindus and Muslims and a symbolic representation of cultural synthesis between Hinduism and Islam, was born during the offspring of Hinduism and Islam. Persian, the state language, was in the long run accepted by the Hindus as the language of opportunity and synthetic culture of the age. The modern Hindi language took birth during the Muslim period. From the thirteenth century onward, not only Khushru but a large number of Sufi Saints contributed to the development. Akbar's reign is important and instructive for the spirit of Hindu-Muslim synthesis and harmony.

CONCLUSION

From the ancient Indus Valley Civilization to modern-day India, the country has imbibed, evolved, and celebrated a myriad of influences, giving birth to its unique identity. India's composite culture is a rich tapestry woven from diverse threads of history, tradition, and civilization. Many different cultures and religions have coexisted and interacted on the Indian subcontinent throughout its history. Indian culture is based on the blending of various spiritual traditions and social movements. India's composite culture may be a heterogeneous blend of numerous societies' assembly and co-existing in one single locale. The evolution of a composite culture reached its zenith during the independence movement, which found its expression in the Constitution.

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